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Chair: Mr. Bhattarai (Chair) ..... (Nepal)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Managing after-service health insurance liabilities (A/70/7/Add.42 and A/70/590)

1. **Mr. Guazo** (Director, Accounts Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on managing after-service health insurance liabilities (A/70/590), said that, by its resolution 68/244, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to examine the option of broadening the mandate of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, based on input from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board, to include the administration of after-service health insurance benefits, taking into account the associated advantages and disadvantages, as well as to undertake a survey of current health-care plans for active and retired staff of the United Nations system, and explore options for increasing efficiency and containing costs.

2. The report provided, for the first time, a comprehensive overview of the number and type of United Nations system health insurance plans and related methods of administration, annual costs and numbers of persons insured, based on the analysis of a working group established by the Finance and Budget Network of the High-level Committee on Management of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). In addition to CEB, the Working Group comprised representatives of the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management, 16 United Nations system agencies, the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, and the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) and Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA).

3. There were 23 insurance plans, covering 401,166 internationally and nationally recruited active and retired staff and their dependants system-wide. In 2014 the cost of benefits under those plans had amounted to $731.7 million, representing 1.7 per cent of the total assessed and voluntary contributions received by the United Nations system. Administrative expenditures represented approximately 6 per cent of total costs, a low figure compared with industry benchmarks.

4. The Working Group had proposed eight recommendations to improve health insurance management. In recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 8, the Working Group encouraged system entities to collectively negotiate contracts with third-party administrators, health-care providers, insurers and asset managers. In recommendation 4, it underscored the need to secure access, where possible, by retirees and their dependants to national health insurance schemes. In recommendation 5, the Working Group indicated that, although the mandate of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund should not be broadened, the Pension Fund should be requested to share its best practice approach and methods for centralization and administration of a complex multi-employer plan. In recommendation 6, the Working Group proposed the standardization of the general valuation methodology for after-service health insurance liabilities across all system organizations. Lastly, in recommendation 7, it highlighted the need for organizations to adequately fund after-service health insurance liabilities, which had totalled $16.1 billion in 2014, although it did not propose a specific funding plan for the liability of the United Nations Secretariat.

5. The Secretary-General invited the General Assembly to welcome and take note of his report, particularly the analysis regarding any potential role for the Pension Fund in after-service health insurance; to endorse recommendations 1 to 8 by the Working Group; and to request him to maintain the Working Group for the purpose of examining further options for increasing efficiency and containing costs, and to put forward specific proposals regarding those matters at the seventy-first session.

6. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/70/7/Add.42), said that the Assembly should endorse recommendations 1 to 3 by the Working Group, calling for a collective approach to dealing with third-party administrators, health-care providers and insurers. Notwithstanding the barriers posed by the diversity of health insurance plans and operating models across the system, opportunities existed for consolidation with a view to achieving economies and efficiencies while maintaining access to high quality health care. Although the implementation of recommendation 4, that participants should be required to participate in national health insurance plans in addition to their United Nations plans, could

achieve savings, the Advisory Committee was not in a position to recommend its endorsement until it received more information about national health insurance plans in the countries of residence of United Nations retirees.

7. While not in a position to recommend the endorsement of recommendation 5 by the Working Group, against broadening the role of the Pension Fund, the Advisory Committee recognized the Fund's potential role in sharing its best practices and operating methods, should United Nations organizations take a system-wide approach to after-service health insurance coverage. The Advisory Committee recommended the endorsement of recommendation 6, calling for standardization of the general valuation methodology for liabilities across all organizations, and expected every effort to be made to implement it. With regard to recommendation 7, regarding funding of after-service health insurance liabilities, the pay-as-you-go approach should be continued, as it was still considered a viable option by the General Assembly. Lastly, the Advisory Committee was not in a position to recommend the endorsement of recommendation 8, on leveraging existing arrangements with external asset managers, as no decision pertaining to that recommendation had been taken by the General Assembly.

8. **The Chair**, on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, invited a representative of FAFICS to make a statement.

9. **Ms. Saputelli** (Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants) said that FAFICS, acting on behalf of 58 member associations, represented the interests of tens of thousands of retirees from across the United Nations system. As health insurance was of critical importance to retirees, FAFICS members had a direct interest in ensuring the sound financing and management of after-service health insurance schemes.

10. Continuing access to health insurance for retired staff previously enrolled in staff health insurance schemes for a significant period was á common feature of United Nations health insurance arrangements that was of particular importance to expatriate staff. The cost of after-service health insurance was shared between the former employer and the retiree; former staff therefore had significant acquired rights to after-service coverage under United Nations system plans, and FAFICS expected the principle of intergenerational equity to be respected in the context of future reviews of health insurance schemes.

11. FAFICS supported the intent behind the recommendations relating to negotiations with third-party administrators, targeted at cost containment and value for money, as participants in after-service health insurance schemes contributed to premiums and would benefit from the resulting cost efficiencies. However, cost containment measures should not be adopted at the expense of the quality of health care offered. The recommendation that consideration should be given to the use of national health insurance schemes in conjunction with United Nations schemes also had the limited concurrence of the Federation, on the understanding that national health insurance plans and the relevant national legislation must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the current quality of health care was fully maintained. Regarding broadening the mandate of the Pension Fund to cover health insurance matters, FAFICS was convinced that no benefit would be derived, although best practices could be shared.

12. FAFICS supported the harmonization of the methodology for valuing health insurance liabilities under the auspices of the Task Force on Accounting Standards. The recommendation on adequate funding of ASHI liabilities was particularly important. Organizations applying a pay-as-you-go basis should move to a pay-as-you-accrue basis as being fully consistent with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and enhancing organizations' ability to meet their obligation to provide health benefits to serving and former staff. In that regard, steps should be taken to ensure that existing unfunded liabilities were financed and unfunded liabilities did not increase. Lastly, FAFICS supported the recommendation to use external assets managers, as well-managed investment arrangements would ultimately result in lower insurance premiums for retirees and organizations, provided that efforts to maximize returns did not expose reserves to undue risk.

13. **Mr. Chamlongrasdr** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, noted that many staff could not benefit from national social security schemes. The Group attached great importance to staff welfare, including in connection with the settlement of end-of-service liabilities and after-service health insurance. Given the long-term implications of

after-service health insurance for Member States and staff, a holistic and sustainable solution that drew on common international practice needed to be adopted, particularly with regard to funding mechanisms and investment. A system-wide approach should be taken to the funding and administration of after-service health insurance benefits.

14. Noting that the growth in the aggregate after-service health insurance liability from $12.1 billion in 2012 to $16.1 billion in 2014 was primarily attributable to the fall in the discount rates used in the liability valuations by some two percentage points, the Group concurred with the Advisory Committee that the general valuation methodology should be standardized and that key after-service health insurance liability valuation factors should be established system-wide. The Group also agreed regarding the existence of opportunities for consolidating the diversity of health insurance plans across the United Nations system with a view to achieving financial and operational economies and efficiencies. Lastly, the Group would seek further information on elements outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/70/590) pertaining to funding of after-service health insurance liabilities, investment of reserves, the mandate of the Pension Fund and the Working Group's recommendations.

Agenda item 139: Human resources management
(A/70/135, A/70/229, A/70/253, A/70/254, A/70/307, A/70/605, A/70/718, A/70/728, A/70/764, A/70/765, A/70/685 and A/70/685/Add.1)

15. **Ms. Wainaina** (Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/70/605), said that the report provided an analysis of Secretariat staff demographics from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015. The net decrease of 345 staff in the Secretariat from 2014 to 2015 reflected a decrease of 579 staff in the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and a collective decrease of 1,656 staff in 29 other entities, offset by a combined increase of 1,890 staff in 46 entities. From 2011 to 2015, the percentage of staff holding a permanent or continuing appointment had increased from 16 per cent to 23 per cent, while the percentage of staff holding a fixed-term appointment had decreased from 79 per cent to 71 per cent, figures that reflected the one-time conversion to permanent appointments and the first continuing appointment exercise. Lastly, female staff as a percentage of total staff had increased from 33 per cent to 34.4 per cent and the average age of staff had increased from 42.3 to 44.2 years of age. The Secretary-General proposed that, starting in 2017, data on the composition of the Secretariat should be reported for the calendar year of 1 January to 31 December, with a cut-off date of 15 March of the following year, to allow him to provide the additional analysis requested by the General Assembly in paragraphs 13 and 17 of its resolution 68/252.

16. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules (A/70/135), she said that the Secretary-General proposed a comprehensive revision of appendix D to the Staff Rules, governing compensation in the event of death, injury or illness attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the United Nations, as well as slight amendments to rule 4.15, for the purpose of implementing the new managed mobility framework for senior staff. In addition, an amendment was proposed to rule 5.3 (d) to reflect the changes made to article 29 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, which introduced an early retirement age of 58 for staff members joining the Pension Fund on or after 1 January 2014. The amended rule would cover staff members eligible for early retirement at age 55 or 58. Lastly, rule 9.9 would be amended to indicate that annual leave normally payable at the time of separation would not be payable to a staff member dismissed for sexual exploitation or abuse.

17. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on mobility (A/70/254), she said that the report provided an update on progress made by July 2015 towards the implementation of the new staff selection and managed mobility system, in addition to further data and information requested by the General Assembly. It should be underscored that the concept of managed mobility, while critical to the Organization's talent management objectives, was only one element of the new system. The report also contained a proposal to reduce the advertising time for vacancies posted as part of the forthcoming semi-annual staffing exercises from 60 to 30 days in order to bolster progress towards achieving the 120-day target for recruitment set by the General Assembly.

18. The political, peace and humanitarian network (POLNET) had been the first job network to adopt the legislative framework for the new system, effective 1 January 2016. A network staffing team for POLNET had been established and the staffing processes outlined in the report (A/70/254) implemented. Evaluation of candidates had begun for the first managed mobility exercise for POLNET staff, launched in January 2016, and preparations were under way for the first vacancy exercise, due to launch in April 2016. The third annual report on mobility would reflect the outcomes of the first semi-annual staffing exercise and would allow the Committee to examine the results of the initiative and identify areas for improvement.

19. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/70/229), she said that the report had been prepared in response to the request contained in paragraph 31 of General Assembly resolution 68/252, extending for a further three years the exceptional measures authorized by its resolution 67/287. Despite its repeated requests to Member States for information on potential conflicts between their national legislation and the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules that might affect the contractual obligations of seconded active-duty military and police personnel, the Secretariat had received limited responses. The report described two cases in which active-duty officers seconded to the United Nations had continued to receive remuneration from their Governments, in accordance with the exceptional measure authorized in General Assembly resolutions 67/287 and 68/252.

20. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on practice in disciplinary matters and cases of possible criminal behaviour during the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 (A/70/253), she said that the report had been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/287. Chapter II of the report included an overview of the legislative framework governing the investigative and disciplinary processes, while chapter III contained a summary of cases in which the Secretary-General had imposed disciplinary measures during the reporting period. Chapter IV provided statistics on the numbers and types of cases received by the Office of Human Resources Management during the reporting period, the number of cases completed and the disposition of completed cases, as well as information on the outcome of appeals against disciplinary measures since the introduction of the new system of justice in 2009. Chapter V provided information on cases in which the Organization had informed Member States of proven misconduct and/or criminal behaviour.

21. Lastly, she drew the Committee's attention to the overview report on human resources management reform deferred from the Assembly's sixty-ninth session (A/69/190) and related addenda, and looked forward to presenting a new comprehensive report on the Secretary-General's reforms in the area of human resources at the Assembly's seventy-first session.

22. **Ms. Armstrong** (Director, Ethics Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office between 1 August 2014 and 31 July 2015 (A/70/307), said that the Office had responded to 980 requests for services, including 533 confidential ethics advice requests; reviewed 5,043 confidential disclosure statements as part of its financial disclosure programme; facilitated the Secretariat's second leadership dialogue; and conducted 15 preliminary reviews in connection with the Organization's policy on protection against retaliation, in addition to providing advice on related requests.

23. The Office continued to enhance the Organization's culture of ethics, transparency and accountability by holding induction briefings and maintaining the voluntary public financial disclosure initiative for senior officials in order to promote an ethical "tone at the top"; administering the annual financial disclosure exercise; reviewing complaints of retaliation for protected activities such as reporting wrongdoing and cooperating with authorized audits or investigations; providing confidential ethics advice; and conducting outreach and developing training and briefings, including a new online mandatory ethics awareness training programme, in cooperation with the Office of Human Resources Management and various Secretariat departments.

24. The Ethics Office's key role in administering the annual financial disclosure programme, with a compliance rate of 100 per cent for the 2014 cycle, contributed to ensuring that the discharge of staff duties was not influenced by personal interest or external affiliation that would involve conflicts of interest. The Office had completed an internal review of the regulatory framework for the programme in

2014 and made recommendations to strengthen its governing policy. An inter-departmental working group, established in 2015, had identified areas for improvement and would submit recommendations to the Secretary-General. The Office encouraged those senior officials who had not disclosed a summary of their assets under the 2014 voluntary public disclosure exercise to do so.

25. With regard to outreach, the Office continued to reach out to as many staff as possible: there was a direct correlation between its outreach services and use by staff of its confidential advisory services, which were essential to preventing, mitigating and managing ethical and reputational risks concerning the Organization. Similarly, the annual leadership dialogues demonstrated the Organization's commitment to ethics education at the highest levels. In that connection, the Office was contributing to the development of a discussion guide on fraud awareness and prevention for the 2016 leadership dialogue to ensure that reporting and advisory mechanisms in cases of alleged misconduct were clear to all staff.

26. On the basis of an external expert review and reflecting best practice, the Office, in collaboration with the Department of Management, the Office of Legal Affairs and the Office of Internal Oversight Services, had revised the policy on protection against retaliation to reflect a focus on the reporting of misconduct that posed harm to the operations, governance and interests of the Organization.

27. Lastly, the ongoing collaboration among members of the Ethics Panel of the United Nations ensured the coherent and consistent application of ethical standards in the Secretariat and the funds and programmes. By engaging directly with staff and other stakeholders in support of the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and promoting adherence to high standards of efficiency, competency and integrity, the Office provided critical support to the Secretary-General and Member States.

28. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on human resources management (A/70/718), said that the Advisory Committee was not fully convinced of the need to remove the provision on term limits for members of central review bodies from rule 4.15 of the Staff Regulations and Rules, and recommended that the Secretary-General should provide additional justification for the proposal.

29. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposed amendment to staff rule 9.9 to ensure that accrued annual leave would not be paid to staff dismissed for sexual exploitation; in his next report the Secretary-General should include a proposal to broaden the scope of the amendment to cover other types of serious misconduct. Noting the increase in the number of disciplinary cases during the 2015 reporting period compared with the two previous reporting periods, the Advisory Committee regretted that a revised administrative instruction on investigations and the disciplinary process had not yet been issued.

30. With regard to the Ethics Office, the Advisory Committee welcomed the efforts to provide explanatory details of reporting and advisory mechanisms in cases of alleged wrongdoing and underscored the need to ensure that such mechanisms were clear to all United Nations personnel. Lastly, the Secretary-General should encourage those senior officials who had not disclosed their assets under the voluntary financial disclosure initiative to do so.

31. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on mobility (A/70/765), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposal to reduce from 60 to 30 days the advertising time for vacancies posted as part of the semi-annual staff exercises under the mobility and career development framework. A comparative baseline against which future mobility trends could be measured should be established for the General Assembly's consideration no later than at the main part of its seventy-first session. The Secretary-General should provide more information on mobility data, including on staff in hardship duty stations and on the lessons learned from the first managed mobility exercise implemented by POLNET.

32. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on seconded active-duty military and police personnel (A/70/728), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the actions requested by the Secretary-General, including the extension for up to three years of the application of the exceptional measures authorized by the General Assembly in its resolutions 67/287 and 68/252.

33. Introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the composition of the Secretariat: staff

demographics (A/70/764), he said that, while the Advisory Committee did not object to the proposed change in the reporting cycle and the cut-off date for the demographic data included in the composition report, the data for the six-month transitional period from July to December 2016 should be reflected in the report to be submitted to the Assembly at its seventy-second session in a format that facilitated comparison with past and future periods. The General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to include an analysis and explanation of the possible reasons for certain trends, including the impact of recent human resources reforms, in future reports.

34. The upward shift in the grade structure of the Secretariat remained a matter of concern. Rather than enabling the Organization to respond more effectively to the mounting demands it faced, the increased concentration of staff in senior positions could lead to fragmentation of leadership responsibilities and diffused accountability. The Advisory Committee expected a review of existing functions and structures to be undertaken before proposals for high-level positions were presented, to minimize possible overlap in functional responsibilities at the senior level of the Organization. In that connection, the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to explain his policy on senior appointments in his next overview report on human resources management reform. The Advisory Committee also expected the guidelines concerning appointments on one-dollar-per-year contracts to be issued without further delay, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 67/255, and to be routinely informed of appointments. Lastly, the Advisory Committee expected a fully developed strategy for the development of a robust workforce planning system to be included in the next overview report on human resources management reform for the timely consideration of the General Assembly.

35. **Mr. Achamkulangare** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the United Nations system organizations (A/70/685), said that the report provided an assessment of the use of non-staff personnel, including policies, regulations, contractual practices and associated managerial processes, in United Nations system organizations. Around 45 per cent of the system's workforce worked under non-staff contracts, performing administrative, technical, project-related and managerial functions for extended periods in a de facto employment relationship, a phenomenon that had resulted in a workforce divided between personnel with full entitlements and personnel with limited entitlements. While non-staff contracts offered administrative flexibility and cost efficiency, such practical advantages should not override the obligation of organizations to uphold the values embodied by the United Nations and to adhere to good labour practices.

36. Organizations had developed policies and contractual modalities for the use of non-staff personnel in a fragmented manner, owing to the absence of overarching, system-wide criteria. In addition, the lack of analytical data on the use of non-staff and, in particular, on the profile and final cost of the non-staff workforce, undermined the effectiveness of decision-making and of monitoring, internal controls and the support and oversight provided by headquarters departments. The inappropriate use of non-staff personnel also contributed to increased reputational risk, high turnover, a lack of stable and motivated personnel and an increased risk of legal action against organizations. A working group, akin to the International Civil Service Commission, should be established under the High-level Committee on Management for the purpose of harmonizing non-staff policies and practices across the system.

37. Organizations should review the long-term use of non-staff personnel and establish short-to-medium-term plans to terminate the practice; the plans should include an assessment of the financial resources required for implementation and provisions to enable long-serving non-staff personnel to apply for vacant staff positions as internal candidates. Following approval by legislative and governing bodies, changes should be made to the relevant rules and regulations. Organizations needed guidelines on the use of non-staff personnel to guide managers' decision-making so as to minimize the confusion and inefficiencies arising from the use of multiple types of non-staff contracts, and should adopt a single contractual modality for non-staff personnel, following the example of the International Labour Organization. Executive heads must ensure that third-party contractors had decent working conditions.

38. Non-staff personnel were as essential an asset as staff, and should have access to internal justice mechanisms, including mediation, the Ethics Office, the Office of the Ombudsman and other informal conflict resolution mechanisms. In addition, they should be covered by policies on whistle-blowing and the prevention of harassment.

39. **Mr. Herman** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the JIU report (A/70/685/Add.1), said that the report made a valuable contribution to analysis of the use of non-staff modalities by United Nations organizations, although the broad use of the term "non-staff personnel" to refer to a variety of personnel categories and contractual modalities complicated analysis of the use of such arrangements. For some organizations the use of non-staff contracts allowed for greater agility and flexibility in staffing and was particularly important for providing surge capacity in the context of humanitarian operations. Organizations with voluntary funding models often used non-staff arrangements as they were unable to make long-term staffing commitments owing to the unpredictability of their funding.

40. Organizations noted the benefit of providing non-staff contract holders with appropriate conditions of service, including insurance. Many of the recommendations presented in the report offered a constructive approach to the challenges posed by non-staff arrangements. Organizations particularly welcomed recommendation 4 on the strengthening of internal monitoring and oversight through enhanced information systems, and recommendation 8 on the need to promote gender balance. However, the financial impact that would result from the adoption of recommendation 3 on terminating the long-term use of non-staff personnel made it difficult to implement. Organizations were also concerned about recommendation 7 on the working conditions of third-party contractors, as they had limited ability to influence the salaries and social entitlements of third parties.

41. **The Chair**, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 35/213, invited a representative of the Staff-Management Committee to make a statement.

42. **Mr. Richards** (Staff-Management Committee), speaking on behalf of the staff unions of the United Nations, said, regarding the Secretary-General's proposals in the overview report on human resources management reform introduced at the sixty-ninth session (A/69/190), that the proposal to extend the time limit for temporary appointments from one year to two years was at odds with the purpose of temporary appointments, which were limited in duration in order to incentivize managers to reappoint high-performing staff needed for longer than a year through the staff selection system, subject to gender and geographical diversity requirements. Rather, steps should be taken to ensure that temporary staff received the same pay and entitlements as other staff.

43. The United Nations staff unions supported the proposal to allow performance reports covering periods of less than one year to count towards eligibility for continuing appointments. With regard to staff selection, the reported average time of 213 days required to fill a vacancy did not reflect the interval between the post becoming vacant and the advertising of the vacancy, during which managers often filled posts temporarily for extended periods, a practice that undermined career development and morale, particularly for entry-level staff. The method of measuring vacancy periods should be reviewed.

44. The staff unions had developed a number of proposals on revision of the performance management framework to promote greater flexibility in the composition of rebuttal panels and more clarity with regard to performance improvement plans. The Staff-Management Committee was developing proposals to promote ongoing feedback from supervisors to staff members, necessary for good performance.

45. The troubled climate at the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, as evidenced by the repeated attempts of its Chief Executive Officer to disassociate the Fund from the United Nations, low staff morale, retaliation against whistle-blowers and the chaos that had characterized the Pension Board's 2015 meeting, should be addressed as a matter of priority. The six-month delay in the pay-out of first pension payments to new retirees was particularly unacceptable. While the Secretary-General had placed the Chief Executive Officer on a performance improvement plan with orders to reduce the payment backlog from six months to zero by 31 May 2016, the staff unions called for his prompt replacement. With regard to staff well-being, the fact that 40 per cent of the disability pensions awarded by the Pension Fund

were based on a mental health diagnosis, compared with the worldwide percentage of 25 per cent, reflected the significant stress endured by staff serving in hardship duty stations. In that regard, he called for the restoration of accelerated home leave for staff serving in category C duty stations, and, in recognition of the global mobility of candidates, for the discontinuation of the requirement for staff members to renounce permanent resident status in a country outside their country of nationality on joining the Organization.

46. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/70/307), the inadequate focus on whistle-blower protection was a matter of concern. In particular, the refusal to grant judicial review to whistle-blowers denied protection from retaliation ran counter to the recommendation made by Judge Louise Otis of Canada in her related report, the judgment of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal in *Nguyen-Kropp Postica v. Secretary-General of the United Nations*, and the findings of the independent panel on sexual exploitation and abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the Central African Republic, which had highlighted weaknesses in the independence of the Ethics Office.

47. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules (A/70/135), the proposal to deny payment of accrued annual leave to staff members dismissed for sexual exploitation or abuse was an arbitrary penalty that would be ineffective in deterring such misconduct. It should be rejected in favour of a comprehensive policy proposal for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, currently under consideration by the Staff-Management Committee. Lastly, the Organization's practice of offering unpaid internships denied it access to a broad pool of talent from developing countries: only 42 per cent of United Nations interns originated from non-Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member countries, which represented 82 per cent of the world's population. The practice also contravened international labour standards. The Secretary-General should examine the possibility of providing interns with stipends, drawing on the practices of specialized agencies.

48. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, underscored the essential role of United Nations staff, the most important asset of the Organization, many of whom risked their lives to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of the Organization's mandates. The Group attached great importance to the issues raised in the Secretary-General's reports on the management of human resources, and was concerned at the delay in the issuance of the relevant documentation, particularly the Secretary-General's report on the amendments to the Staff Regulations and Rules (A/70/135).

49. Equitable geographical representation in the Secretariat must be ensured by increasing the proportion of staff from developing countries, including women, particularly at senior levels, as well as by enhancing the transparency of the recruitment process and ensuring effective workforce planning. Implementation of global mandates required a truly global Secretariat. The Group would seek further information on the first managed mobility exercise and the impact of the policy on opportunities for external candidates and on hardship duty stations. It would also monitor the costs of the managed mobility framework and the number of geographical moves planned for 2016.

50. The Group would examine the Secretary-General's proposal to revise the performance management system, bearing in mind the need for transparent and quantifiable benchmarks to encourage performance, skills development and talent retention. Lastly, efforts should be undertaken to address the proliferation of senior level positions in the Secretariat in order to avoid duplication and overlap of functions while ensuring effective mandate delivery.

51. **Mr. Conroy** (United States of America) said that human resources management reforms must focus on ensuring that the Organization had an adaptable, integrated, field-oriented and global workforce to achieve its strategic objectives. He encouraged continued implementation of the reforms currently under way, particularly the new mobility policy, which would enable staff to acquire diverse skills and experience, and looked forward to updates on its implementation. To ensure mandate delivery, the Organization must establish a robust performance management framework designed to identify potential, reward good performance and address underperformance.

52. As recognized by the Secretary-General, much remained to be done in terms of workforce and succession planning to ensure that human capital was aligned with mandate requirements and that critical

human resources policy objectives, such as the enhancement of gender diversity, were fulfilled. He commended the Ethics Office on its work in the areas of outreach, training and education, procurement ethics and financial disclosure and looked forward to the finalization of the policy on protection against retaliation for whistle-blowers.

53. **Mr. Chung** Byung-ha (Republic of Korea) said that the human resources management framework must be aimed at recruiting the most qualified candidates and harnessing the full potential of staff, the Organization's most valuable asset, to respond to the international community's pressing needs in a flexible manner. He welcomed the timely implementation of the managed mobility framework, which would enhance the Organization's capacity to adapt to a rapidly changing international environment by facilitating the strategic deployment of staff.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.